(c) & (d) The Confederation of Flour Mills of Southern States had made a request to reduce the existing prices of wheat under Food Corporation of India's (FCI) Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) (OMSS) (D) Government have decided to reduce the issue price of wheat under OMSS (D) with effect from December 3, 1999.

(e) As on September 30, 1999 there was 204.05 lakh tonnes of wheat in the Central Pool maintained by the Food Corporation of India. This was 88.05 lakh tonnes in excess of the buffer stock of 116.00 lakh tonnes required to be maintained as on 01.10.1999, as per the buffer stock norms.

Rice and Wheat for Cyclone affected Orissa

416. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a need to release adequate quantum of rice and wheat for the cyclone affected areas of Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by the Central Government in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Central Government has made special allocation of 2,19,540 tonnes of rice and 50,000 tonnes of wheat to the Government of Orissa at Central Issue Prices applicable for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families for distribution to cyclone affected people of 14 districts in Orissa. This is to enable the Orissa Government to distribute 20 kg of foodgrains per family per month to all affected families in the 14 districts of the State for a period of five months from November, 1999 till March, 2000 without discriminating between BPL and APL families.

Out of 2,19,540 tonnes of rice, 2,000 tonnes rice has been allocated to the State Government for use by NGOs of repute and Central PSUs to run community kitchens in Orissa for cyclone affected people.

The special allocation is in addition to the regular monthly allotment of rice and wheat being given to the State under Targeted Public Distribution System.

Import duty on Sugar

417. SHRI RAJUBHAIA. PARMAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether despite surplus stocks of sugar during the current year, Government failed to impose any restrictive import duty on sugar;

(b) if so, the quantum of sugar imported during the year; and

(c) how it affected the Indian sugar industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) Government increased the customs duty on imports of sugar thrice in the financial year 1998-99. On 28.4.98, Government imposed 5% customs duty and countervailing duty (CVD) of Rs. 850 per tonne. On 14.1.99, Government increased customs duty at imports of sugar from 5% to 20%. With the change in the customs duty rate structure in the budget proposals for the financial year 1999-2000, the customs duty on imports of sugar was revised to 25% along with surcharge of 10% w.e.f. 28.2.99. Hence, the effective rate of protection to sugar industry comes to 27.5% plus countervailing duty of Rs. 850/- per tonne.

(b) During the financial year 1999-2000, the published data of DGCI&S Calcutta is available for the period April to August, 1999. During this period imports of sugar are provisionally estimated at 5,59,254 tonnes of sugar.

(c) The quantity of imports of sugar is not very large with reference to production and consumption of sugar. Inspite of the imports, the domestic sugar prices have remained fairly stable.

Recognition of Satriya Dance form as classical

418. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sangeet Natak Academi has initiated necessary ground work for recognition of Satriya Dance form as classical, in line with Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri, Kuchipudi and Odissi;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be declared as classical form of dance;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of various grants, documentation, awards and other forms of support extended by Government, as well as the Academy, for preservation and augmentation of this important segment of performing arts heritage of the country?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) The Sangeet Natak Akademi has informed that it does not any more follow the policy of formally declaring any art as classical or otherwise. The Akademi has taken note that dance and music forms of Satriya constitute an important segment of the art heritage of our country. During the recent past Sangeet Natak Akademi had given financial assistance to two organizations. The Akademi has video/audio recordings of 15 programms of Satriya Dance and Allied Forms. Further the Akademi has honoured one artist with Akademi fellowship and eight artists with SNA awards.